

Dog Days of Summer

By Wanda Kurchaba



Can you smell the wonderful aroma of the spruce needles from the native-to-Manitoba white spruce trees? What about the lingering drift of smoke from a recently lit campfire? Or maybe it's the smell of fresh? Fresh leaves, fresh grass, fresh Manitoba lake water.

To me, all of these aromas signal life at the lake. Living in Manitoba, we all know that summers can be and often are too short. It doesn't seem to matter if we have the perfect spring, the best weather all summer long and a wonderful fall, we still feel robbed when the extended hours of daylight and the carefree, dog days of summer come to an end.

Heading to the lake in Manitoba can mean different things to different people. For some people it's embracing life in an isolated cabin sitting on a hill with a small, but beautiful to look at, body of water in perfect view. To others, it's enjoying time with family and friends at a seasonal, recreational vehicle campground. Then, there are those that put the rubber to the road and travel from fabulous campsite to campsite every single weekend of



Photo By Wanda Kurchaba

the summer starting with the May long weekend. Some people just couldn't live without their waterfront cottage with a perfect, clear view, and then there are others who enjoy the peacefulness of a cabin just a stone's throw away. I think that's the beauty of it. It seems as though, the options are limitless and there truly is a time, a place and a style of a home-away-from-home for everyone.

Regardless, of where you sleep, I think lake life is lake life. It's about getting together with family and friends, it's about being on a mini-vacation. Don't you just feel it, even as you drive up to your final destination...the shoulders relax, the tension dissipates, energy levels increase and sweet dreams turn into reality. The scents, the scenery, the sounds...it's all yours to take in and enjoy.

With an abundance of lakes throughout the province, time spent there tends to come with an endless list of fun, interactive and enjoyable activities. That's definitely an added bonus to living in Manitoba.

I dare the kids to ever say 'I'm bored' when we're at the lake. I realize that not everyone is fortunate enough to have a boat, an RV, an ATV and all kinds of fun accessories, but even without that stuff there's still plenty to do.

I challenged myself to come up with a list of at least 20 things to do while at the lake. Not surprising, I met and surpassed my goal and found it quite amazing as to how many things I was able to come up with.

Swimming, hiking, walking, quadding, napping in the hammock or zero gravity chair, boating, picking berries/mushrooms/nuts, biking, scavenger hunts, fishing, waterskiing, wakeboarding, tubing, bird watching, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boating, building sandcastles, nature photography, playing games (Frisbee, lawn bowling, bocce ball, croquet) hunting, going on a picnic, golfing, searching for weird bugs, taking a drive to look for wildlife, reading, listening to the elk bugling or the coyotes howling, looking for fireflies, watching the sun set, having a bonfire (of course with s'mores and cheesy sandwiches) and the most common activity of all (albeit far from the most popular)...squatting mosquitoes!

This doesn't even take into account all the socializing with family and friends or all the wonderful food and delicious meals we create and toss on the barbeque.

The beauty with most of these activities is that you don't have to have a waterfront place or even a permanent location (although, I think that's what many of us dream of!). You can still enjoy life at the lake even if you're able to just make a day trip out of it.



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Of course, in many cases waterfront locations aren't available and may not even be in the budget. The benefit to this is that the prices of property that don't have an adjacent shoreline are often less expensive and for those with young children they often feel safer being a little further away from the water. In many cases you still get a great view, you just enjoy it from a little further away.

Regardless of whether you're right on the water, a five-minute walk or 10-minute drive away there's nothing like spending the day, a weekend, a week or the entire summer at your favourite Manitoba hotspot.

Summer is just around the corner and we all know it's the shortest season of the year, so put your plans together now so you don't miss out on any of the fun!

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